REMARKS

Claim 10 remains pending and has been amended to clarify the invention. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as anticipated by Penn et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,033,435). The rejection is respectfully traversed. The cited reference is directed to an expandable bifurcated stent having a proximal end and a distal end in communication with one another and associated methods for producing and delivering the stent. With all due respect to the Examiner's assertion, there is no teaching that the reference discloses a guide wire retaining element, as is presently being claimed. The retaining element of the Applicant's invention, in clip form, is illustrated in FIG. 6 and correspondingly described on pages 8-9, lines 23-30 and 1-14, respectively. Briefly, the clip 30 serves to keep the guide wires 16,20 from crossing and wrapping **outside** the body. In the illustrated embodiment, slits 32 in the clip retain the guide wires while allowing them to slide therethrough. FIG. 12 of the Penn et al. patent is relied upon by the Examiner as illustrating a guide wire retaining element, whereas the drawing shows a stent 20 within a bifurcated body passageway 150. There is no teaching that the stent retains guide wires as claimed in the present invention. Moreover, no structure is shown in the Penn et al. patent for retaining guide wires. It is therefore respectfully submitted that the cited reference clearly fails to anticipate the present invention as claimed in independent claim 10.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to claim 10 by the present amendment. The attached page is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES."

In light of the above amendment and remarks, Applicant earnestly believes that claim 10 is in condition for allowance and respectfully requests that the application be passed to issue.

Respectfully submitted,

FULWIDER PATTON LEE & UTECHT, LLP

By: _____
John Nagy Reg. No. 50,664

JSN:EPW:jeb
#250829

6060 Center Drive, Tenth Floor
Los Angeles, California 90045
Telephone: (310) 824-5555

VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES

IN THE CLAIMS

10. A method of preparing a bifurcated vessel having a bifurcation, a main vessel, and a side branch vessel, for an interventional procedure, comprising the steps of:

providing an elongated catheter;

providing a tracking guide wire and tracking guide wire lumen for receiving the tracking guide wire, the tracking guide wire lumen extending through at least a portion of the catheter;

providing an integrated guide wire and integrated guide wire lumen for receiving the integrated guide wire, the integrated guide wire lumen extending through at least a portion of the catheter;

wherein the tracking guide wire lumen and the integrated guide wire lumen run substantially parallel to each other throughout their lengths, and the tracking guide wire lumen and the integrated guide wire lumen do not move apart with respect to each other;

back loading the tracking guide wire into the tracking guide wire lumen;

advancing the catheter over the tracking guide wire to a position proximal of the bifurcation in the main vessel;

advancing the integrated guide wire through the integrated guide wire lumen and into the side branch vessel [branch];

[removing the catheter from a patient's vasculature;]

providing a retaining element for retaining the tracking guide wire and the integrated guide wire in a spaced apart relationship proximal to said elongated catheter; [and]

maintaining the position of the tracking guide wire relative to the integrated guide wire with the retaining element[.]; and

removing the catheter from a patient's vasculature.